(c) and (d) There is a tentative proposal of involving the private sector in maintenance|development| operation of National Highways in the country. However, one of the pre-requisites for private sector participation is amendment of the National Highways Act, 1956 to provide levy of fee on national Highway section, which is yet to be done in consultation with the appraisal agencies etc. It is, therefore, too early to give any indication about timing in this regard.

Direct flight to Jorhat from Delhi

213. SHRI BHADRESWAR BURAGOHAIN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to connect Jorhat with a direct flight from Delhi in its next time schedule; and

(b) whether Government are aware that in the absence of a direct air service from Delhi to Jorhat, the commuting public has to incur extra expenditure and wastage of time while proceeding via Calcutta?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI MADHAV RAO SCINDIA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) In the existing schedule of Indian Airlines, the passengers travelling between Delhi and Jorhat have been provided with immediate connection at Guwahati, three days a week on each side.

Abolishing the restricted area permit for North East Region

214. SHRI BHADRESWAR BURAGOHAIN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry moved the Ministry of Home Affairs for abolishing the Restricted Area Permit from the North East in order to attract foreign tourists; and

(b) if so, what are the results thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI MADHAV RAO SCINDIA): (a) The Department of Tourism has been making proposals from time to time for relaxation of the Restricted Area| Protected area regime in the North Eastern States with a view to promoting tourism.

(b) Government have made certain relaxations in the existing procedure and opened certain areas in the North Eastern States for Tourism keeping in view the security consraints.

Construction of Yatri Niwas in Assam

215. SHRI BHADRESWAR BURAGOHAIN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to construct few Yatri Nivas for the low budget tourists in Assam; and

(b) if so, what are the places selected for the purpose.

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI MADHAV RAO SCINDIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Guwahati.

Upgradation of Andhra Pradesh roads to National Highways

216. SHRI T. CHANDRASEKHAR REDDY: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government of Andhra Pradesh have suggested to the Central Government to upgrade certain roads in the State to National highways;

(b) if so, what are the details of the same;